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Netflix wasn't even looking for a crime documentary series.

In the years that followed, the filmmakers returned to their previous jobs for production money: Ricciardi was an attorney, while Demos worked on film sets doing lighting.

Moira Demos, right, with another film student at Colombia University. Getty Images

"We needed time and some financial support to bring on collaborators to complete the vision," Demos explained.

Prepared to prove they knew where the series would be going, the duo had rough cuts of the first three episodes, sketches of episode four and five, and they had a 20-page outline of the series when they met with Netflix in 2013.

Netflix's chief content officer Ted Sarandos said at the Television Critics Association press tour that the company wasn't in the market for a true-crime series at the time it picked up "Making a Murderer," but he was impressed by the filmmakers.

"This film came to us three years ago, it was already seven years in the making," Sarandos said. "The filmmakers have lived this thing for 10 years. I think that's what played out on-screen. I think that's why people followed."

What they learned from their success.

As for other filmmakers looking to do something similar to "Making a Murderer," the filmmakers have a few pieces of advice.

The filmmakers and Steven Avery's ex-fiancee Jodi Stachowski while shooting "Making a Murderer." Netflix

They wouldn't suggest jumping into a project, as they did, without already having the finances to complete it. Demos suggested filmmakers "fundraise or apply for grants or anything" they can find to help.

"Also, I would encourage filmmakers to just make the most out of the assets you do have. Laura and I didn't have any funding, but what we did have was time," she continued. "We could embed ourselves in this community and capture something that nobody else was capturing for not a lot of money

"I would advise people to be very clear on your priorities when shopping it around. Different distributors can offer you different things. Our priority was format, and that drove our decisions."

SEE ALSO: Steven Avery hasn't been allowed to watch 'Making a Murderer' in prison »

MORE: 'Making a Murderer' directors address abuse allegations by Steven Avery's ex-fiancee »

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